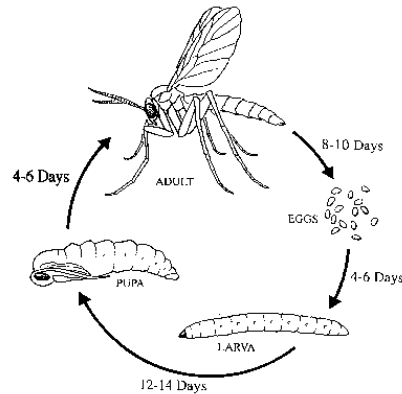




Eco-Sensitive Pest Solutions

Technical Bulletin: Fungus Gnats In Potted Plants



OVERVIEW: These pests are part of the *Sciaridae* family and are not a biting species. If complaints of bites arise it is usually associated with static electricity or the assumption that all flying insects bite. They are quite common in offices where plants are found and it is due to poor plant maintenance (over + under watering). They gravitate toward windows, attracted by sunlight, but may also fly about desks.

CONTROL MEASURES: There are several Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approaches to solving this problem. The top 4" of potted plants should be layered with 2" of play sand then on top of that 2" of small (3/4" or larger) stones. This allows water to flow through and water the plant but will dry significantly faster than soil. This prevents the Fungus Gnat from laying eggs in the moist soil.

The other option for existing infestations is to use bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (B.T.I.) which is a biological product that controls gnats. It is sold at most home and garden type stores and can be found on the internet under the brand name of "goGnats" concentrate. The product is added when watering plants and controls the larval stage by disrupting the life cycle and preventing maturity to the adult stage. The product has a short residual life so it may need to be applied repeatedly over a few weeks to achieve control. For larger commercial planters, this product can be professionally applied by the horticulturalist firm during normal service intervals.

Ultra-Low-Volume (ULV) applications will yield limited results because it does not affect the immature stages only adults. Insect Light Traps (ILT's) will only trap adult activity but can minimize the nuisance.

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